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LETTER DATED 20 JUNE 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The humanitarian situation in Rwanda is an ongoing disaster. The cease-fire is not being respected by the parties, and massacres of civilians are continuing on a large scale.

Security Council resolutions 918 (1994) and 925 (1994) give the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) a mandate to intervene in order to put an end to this humanitarian catastrophe. France and Senegal fully subscribe to the objectives and methods advocated in those two resolutions.

No doubt, however, it will take some more time before UNAMIR as expanded in accordance with those resolutions can be operational; it will not be possible to transport and make operational the contingents to be supplied by States, and their equipment, until several weeks from now. This delay is liable to cost more thousands of lives in Rwanda and cause a geographical expansion of the area affected by the tragedy.

Against that background, the Governments of France and Senegal are prepared to send a force in without delay, so as to maintain a presence pending the arrival of the expanded UNAMIR. They are in contact with other Member States likely to join the operation. The objectives assigned to that force would be the same ones assigned to UNAMIR by the Security Council, i.e. contributing to the security and protection of displaced persons, refugees and civilians in danger in Rwanda, by means including the establishment and maintenance, where possible, of safe humanitarian areas. That objective naturally excludes any interference in the development of the balance of military forces between the parties involved in the conflict.

In the spirit of resolution 794 (1992) of 3 December 1992, our Governments would like, as a legal framework for their intervention, a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations giving them a mandate to act until the expanded UNAMIR is deployed. As we see it, the interim force should be able to withdraw towards the middle of August at the latest, after handing over to UNAMIR when its reinforcements have been deployed.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Jean-Bernard MERIMEE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative